

Guide to Holiday Etiquette

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Summary: Here is some useful advice to follow if you happen to celebrate the holidays with the Vikings on Berk. It is a guide to manners... with a twist. Hint- it is intended for non Vikings, and being human is optional. Complete.

Guide to Holiday Etiquette

A/N- Here's my story submitted to the "Sticks and Stones" forum contest on Holiday Stories. I based it on the wonderful Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams and the fun "Useful Phrases for the Tourist (This will keep you alive)" one shot by anthropologist/science fiction writer Joanna Russ.

I came in second place by a narrow margin, and I am frankly surprised. I expected my avant garde approach would be rejected, but kind readers supported me. In the end, I was beaten out by one vote by the writer I consider the best writer in HTTYD, the amazing **AnticRepartee**. She is also one of the best artists in HTTYD-dom. She has won a lot of fanfiction and fanart contests, and it is no surprise to me. She is very talented.

I knew she would win the moment I read her story. I just never expected I would come close to her story that I could be second place.

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><p>Dragon characters belong to Dreamworks and Cressida Cowell.**
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A Guide to Etiquette During the Holidays

It has been a strange year indeed! We now have the opportunity to share our culture and traditions with new creatures in our life who once were our enemies! Since their way of life is so different from

ours, I thought it a good idea to put together some suggestions on how you can enhance your holiday celebrations in the company of these exotic creatures. They seem so strange to us, with their tiny limbs and horned heads, but we now know they have wise minds and warm hearts.

One of our happiest discoveries has been that these amazing beings have all along been celebrating the winter hatching of our young! Who knew that they developed an entire winter holiday around this occasion? Of course, it is understandable they would find the hatching of our young a miraculous occasion to celebrate. We are such awe inspiring creatures that even when we sneeze or yawn it is considered a thing of beauty by lesser beings. (That being most living things on the planet.)

Thus, my good friend, I now share some advice with you on how to celebrate Hatching Day (what the horn-heads call _Snawkltov" _) with our new friends.

****Nonverbal Advice **-**

Here I shall set forth a few pointers on how to interpret horn-head emotions

- When horn-heads turn red in the face, it is usually from negative emotions like shame or anger. Do not give them _The Kiss/Drool of Joy_ . They will not understand.

- When horn-heads snort, it means irony. It does not mean they are flirting with you. Please do not respond to this gesture.

- Horn-heads find it adorable to put colorful strips of cloth around our eggs. We do not understand this behavior, but it is overall benevolent. It makes them let out those cute chirping noises of joy.

- Horn-heads express affection by hitting each other in the shoulders with their front paws. It makes them then exchange breath with each other by locking their mouths together. They seem to enjoy this. We still do not understand why. Since we are their guests, it is not our place to judge.

****Culinary Advice ****

- Horn-heads drink something called _yahhhhknok _ . It is made from many tasty things like yak hair, tripe, hen's eggs, bovine milk, bee spit and nutmeg. They like to share it with us by spitting it on the ground. When a horn-head drinks from the offering vessel and spits it on the ground near you, he is graciously inviting you to lick it from the ground. Don't forget to thank your host for his generosity by offering to vomit some on his foot. If you have an especially close bond, horn-heads may find it touching if you vomit it on their heads. They respond by letting out endearing cries of pleasure. At least we think it is pleasure.

- Horn-heads eat the same meat we do, but they seem to prefer it burned in fire. I know many of you will find this custom revolting since it removes all the pleasant slime-flavors, but please refrain from sharing your opinion on this sensitive manner. We are, after all the guests. We hope they will respond the same way when they attend

one of our fish-barf potlatches in the salmon running festival this summer.

- _Cardamom _ was the best thing ever created. Almost as good as dragon nip. Roll in it whenever you get the chance. The horn-heads will praise you by saying the phrases of hospitality:
_ "Whyryoudointhat? Itsbloodyexpensive! It'sfromAsia! Pleasestopnow."
_ When you hear that, you know you have made a friend for life.

****Decorations ****

The word _Dehkrayshun _ is the horn-head habit of taking flora from nature and then replanting it in fake settings like on their wood-nests. We do not understand the efficiency of this since the plants and berries were better off being on trees and vines, but the horn-heads seem to think otherwise. Nevertheless, here are some guideline:

- _Dehkrayshuns _ are for viewing, not for eating.
- Remember to pretend to show appreciation for them.
- Assist the horn-heads with replanting the _dehkrayshuns._ This means they give you fish in appreciation.

****Bells ****

No, we do not understand these strange things. No, they are not evil. And, no, you may not eat them. You may also not set them on fire. They don't burn well, anyway.

****Polite Phrases ****

While we know the horn-heads do not understand our lyrical and ancient language, it is still important we share good karma with our hosts. Therefore, we encourage you to pass on dragon phrases of courtesy and praise. The horn-heads seem very perceptive, and they may see our traditional words of honor in the way we intend. Here are a few greetings you can share with them (and hope they will eventually understand one day, once we require that all horn-heads learn our language).

- Your shape and form are pleasing and adequate for your species.
- You smell appetizing. I would eat you but I know you would not like that. But I still honor your body odor.
- Your eyes have round pupils, but I find them surprisingly beautiful rather than horrifying.
- May I vomit some food so we can share our joy together?
- You are hairy but in a nice way.
- I wish you happy hatching, even though I know your eggs hatch inside of you.

****Appropriate Gifts ****

The horn-heads seem to enjoy exchanging personal possessions on this day. They like to often use their amazing front paws to make alterations to wood and metal. We can understand the teeth they make from metal and stone, but we still are not sure why the horn-heads make the other items since they have no useful purpose.

The most amazing ones are when they make metal into grass-thin texture. They bend this into interesting shapes. The horn-head egg bearers (well, internal egg bearers) then wear these metal grass-thin objects attached to their ears, around their necks and even wound around the digits of their front paws. The egg bearers preen with delight when given such objects by their males or other egg bearer friends.

The males of the species seem to like it when small tree branches are cut away with their paw-held iron-teeth until the branches are in the shape and form of the long nests the horn-heads put on the water for travel. (They call these water nests, _lawnboatz_) They like these small versions of long nests since they can put them on tables and such in their wooden nests and feel they are still with their wooden long nest even while at home.

The affection male horn-heads feel for their _lawnboatz-water nests_ and their desire to keep smaller copies around when they are at their homes seems to make the egg bearers jealous. This leads to angry seal barking noises followed by the front paw smacks and then mouth-on-mouth exchange of outcome usually results in both horn-heads being happy and giving us more fish so we can share their joy.

Both male and female horn-heads also like to make and gift carved out wooden hollow drink-offering vessels which they use to hold the grainy smelling and honey smelling waters they like to drink. You know those waters; they are the ones that make the horn-heads magically gain the ability to sing off key and talk louder.

They often enjoy holding up the liquid filled wooden drink-offering-vessls and yelling something that sounds like _"Skool _." We think this is some sort of ritual to encourage louder talking and more off key singing. It does seem to work, and the more they say this incantation, the louder and worse they sing. Magic, indeed.

What kind of gifts should you give your horn-head? Here are a few suggestions, gentle friend.

- Instead of making a replica of your horn-head's long water nest, why not just break a piece of the ACTUAL _long water nest_ off and give it to your horn-head? He will appreciate the gesture of knowing he can keep a relic from his actual boat in his house. We particularly find the best gift is to break off that funny little paddle that goes under the long water nest and helps to steer the boat. Your horn-head will be so appreciative that water of joy will come from his or her eyes.

- The horn-heads are not obligatory carnivores like us. They need to eat plants. They like to put seeds in the ground near their nests so they do not have to go into the woods to gather. This is called a _guard-den_. Still, they are forced by limited space to throw some of the plants from the seeds out of their _guard-den_. A thoughtful gift would be to collect those plants that are thrown out and give

the seeds of them to your horn-head so he can replant them when he has more space in the _guard-den_. Better yet, plant the seeds so they will come out when the weather becomes warm. What a thoughtful gift!

My own horn-head jumps up and down in joy when I give him the seeds I have collected or replant them for him. He must be grateful that I am bringing back the ragweed and thistle seeds he had to throw away. It is a shame to waste such pretty flowers.

****The Art of Concealing Gifts ****

The horn-heads like to play a game where they conceal their gift in coverings. They then require the recipient to remove the coverings and pretend to be surprised by the item underneath. This brings joy all around. Maybe this replaces the fact they do not hatch their young in eggs. It is a compensation, but they seem to enjoy it. We suggest the same tradition. You could wrap your gift in shiny and aromatic things like fish gut or seaweed. Then we suggest covering it in a graceful patina of saliva to give it that special pearly sheen. It's the little details that make an ordinary gift into a work of art.

So, gentle friend, I am grateful you took some time to listen to my advice. I feel with a little wit and wisdom and some cultural appreciation on our parts, we can ensure our horn-heads will have a wonderful celebration in our company.

Happy celebrating and please enjoy the dragon nip in moderation.

End
file.